

Lamphier House
West Eldred, McKean County, Penn'a.

HABS No. Pa.-552

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 5-Pennsylvania

Historic American Buildings Survey
J. Howard Hicks, District Officer
134 East 10th Street, Erie, Pennsylvania

42-ELDW.

LAMPHIER HOUSE
West Eldred, McKean County, Pennsylvania

Owner

Grace Margaret, Lucy Calista and Bertha Agnes Robson.

Date of Erection

1837-1840.

Architect

Benjamin H. Lamphier.

Builder

Oscar Carpenter and Alonzo Shaw. Painted by Guy Booth.

Present Condition

Good.

Number of Stories

Two and basement.

Materials of Construction

Virgin white pine.

Other Existing Records

Information and personal recollections furnished by Miss Jessie Carpenter of Eldred (formerly Larabee), also William Benjamin Robson and Mrs. William B. Robson, drawings, photographs, personal interviews.

Additional data

Bibliography:-

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An illustrated History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
De Witt C. Goodrich and Co.,
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When Benjamin H. Lamphier arrived in what is now West Eldred, the country side was densely covered with virgin forest. He often remarked -"Not a stick was cut on my farm." He gradually conquered the wilderness and planned the site for the Lamphier home. He was born in Pitcher, Chenango County, New York, Nov. 18, 1819. His grandfather Benjamin Lamphier was a native of New England, who went to Pitcher, Chenango County, New York, as a pioneer and who later came to Eldred after the death of his wife, in the early years of the 19th century. He was a revolutionary soldier and married Elizabeth Dye, September 28th, 1782. They had two children -Manemah (Mrs. Liberty White) and William. Benjamin Lamphier is buried in the Lamphier Cemetery, Eldred, Pennsylvania. The inscription on his gravestone reads-"He served his country to the end of the war, and his God to the end of his days."

The son William Lamphier settled in Eldred, February, 1834 and improved the farm known as the Lamphier estate and died there. A Mrs. Leo Eaton lives in the house on Main Street of Eldred near the cemetery which is on the edge of the farm toward Eldred. In the early days of Chenango County, New York, William was captain of a rifle company belonging to the New York State militia. William built his home in Eldred. He married Calista Hazen of Hartford, Connecticut and had nine children- Elizabeth born Nov. 27th, 1816 died aged 8 years; Benjamin Hazen born Pitcher, N. Y. November 18th, 1819 buried in the Lamphier cemetery, Eldred, Pennsylvania; Lucy M. (Mrs. G. B. Booth) born March 13th, 1822; William Dye born April 22nd, 1825; Mary, (Mrs. Oscar Carpenter) Calista (Mrs. R. A. Rice) December 7th, 1830; John, January 27th, 1831; Sylvester Gates, March 17th, 1833. All of these children were born in Pitcher except Champlin born July 8th, 1834 in Eldred.

Benjamin Hazen Lamphier was raised in Chenango County, New York until fifteen years and three months of age when he removed to Eldred with his parents. He married Cynthia Carpenter, October 11, 1845, daughter of Timothy and Bethenia (Trumbull) Carpenter of Eldred. He began life as a lumberman which he continued to follow. They had seven children- Egbert R; Albert; A. Timothy; Daniel; Lucy E; Edward H; and Mary Bethenia (Mrs. John Robson). Mr. Lamphier served one term of three years as auditor of McKean County, and held several local offices in Eldred. He was also a member of the Masonic fraternity. He was a farmer, lumberman, raised bees, cattle, sheep, and vegetables; had a sugar orchard, also a fruit orchard with many kinds of fruit, and eventually became successful and influential.

Mary Bethenia Lamphier married John Robson and had nine children- William B; Isabelle Cynthia who married first F. O. Robinson (deceased), and married second F. O. Langworthy;

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Grace Margaret unmarried, superintendent of the Industrial School for Women, North Carolina; Harriet Ann (Mrs. P. E. Phillips) George L; Lucy Calista, unmarried at Claymont, Delaware School for girls (Social Welfare); Hazen Egbert (deceased); Bertha Agnes, unmarried, in office of the University of Buffalo, Buffalo, N. Y. as stenographer; Robert J.

The Lamphier House has remained in the family since its erection and is now owned by Grace Margaret, Lucy Calista, and Bertha Agnes Robson. It is located about 3-1/2 miles from Eldred on Route 2, called the West Eldred Road, in McKean County, Pennsylvania about opposite from Eldred on a hair-pin curve near the Duke Center road. The house was designed by Benjamin Hazen Lamphier. The first house that he built on coming to Eldred was a log-house which he erected on the creek which separates Eldred from West Eldred. Between 1837 and 1840 he designed the Lamphier House and hired Oscar Carpenter and Alonzo Shaw to help him build it. Tradition says that the erection of this house consumed about three years, and that when it was finished it was painted by Guy Booth. It is not hard to believe this, when the interior finish of some of the rooms is examined. All doors, window frames and other lumber was planed by hand, and are virgin white pine with scarcely a blemish in it.

The dining room, now used as a living room, and parlor with the small front bed room were built first, then the two bed rooms and the pantry were added. These two bed rooms and pantry have been converted into one bed room and a storage room. Then the kitchen was built on, and after that the wood house and milk house added. The wood house and milk house have been converted into a bath room and wood shed. In the wood shed the original split lath can still be seen. Evidently all of this house was built within the period of the first construction which covered three years. Even the wood shed door indicates early construction.

The house is located high up on the side of a hill with a gradual slope from the road to the front of the house, which is set back from the road about eighty feet, and is reached by a walk of large, flat, blue shale stones, set in a wide lawn. Trees are planted on each side of the walk near the road. It is a two story house, with a door at each end of the front of the house, flanked by windows on each side. It is the type of house which is found in the northwestern section of Pennsylvania in single, two and sometimes three stories. It is built like a barn frame, with corner posts to the rooms.

The two entrances in the front elevation each have an ornamented cap. The north entrance leads to the present living room, and the south one leads to the parlor. The doors of this

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elevation are probably not the original doors. The living room door has raised panels on the outside and panels with moulding trim on the inside. The living room entrance is reached by two stone steps while wooden steps lead to the parlor entrance.

The windows of the parlor have been modernized and are two sash windows of one light each. There are two windows in the living room with irregular sash, 9 panes in the upper and 6 in the lower sash, 8 x 10. The small bed room to the north of the living room has two windows, the one to the east being of irregular sash like those of the living room and the other being of regular sash, six lights each, two sash. Altogether there are 16 windows on the first floor and 10 on the second floor. There is a stone sill to the cellar windows, which are of one sash, three lights.

The exterior of the house is covered with siding. The cornice with a wide frieze is on the east and west elevations and on the north and south gable ends with returns. The cornice on the rear or west elevation also has returns. It is built up of hand cut mouldings.

The windows of the second story, east elevation are set in the frieze, and are regular sash of six lights each. On the south elevation, second floor near the front or east elevation there is a window of irregular sash, the upper of nine lights and the lower of six. Also one regular sash window of two sash, six lights each.

In the front part of the house on the west or rear elevation there are two very small windows on the second floor that are set in the frieze, with glass, with just a window stop to hold them. The roof of the front part of the house is covered with wooden shingles, the back part has asbestos shingles.

There is a flase mantel in the living room, and a mantel with a fire place in the parlor. The parlor mantel has been remodeled by having the hearth and fireplace set with new brick. The woodwork of this mantel is ornamented with a very delicate design of mouldings planted on. The shelf mouldings of both mantels are quite interesting.

An enclosed stairway leads from the living room to the second floor where three bed rooms, hall, stairs and an unfinished attic are located. The living room has horizontal wainscoting four boards high with a moulded wood cap. The walls of the living room, bath room, parlor and bed rooms have been

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modernized by plaster board with strips. The parlor ceiling is of matched boards. Some of the changes have been made of recent date.

The kitchen has exposed beams or joists. Formerly the living room showed the original beams, but these have been covered with plaster board. The beams in the kitchen have champhered edges. Both beams and floors between are planed on both sides. These beams were varnished and finished as well as the flooring which shows between them. The joists are 3" x 7" in the kitchen, dovetailed into each other. The wainscoting of the kitchen is of horizontal boards 4" wide with wainscot cap. This cap or moulding forms the stool of the kitchen windows. There are raised panels on the seven kitchen doors. Flat mouldings are planted on the outside of the south kitchen door. The back woodshed shows the old split lath.

This house and its occupants seem to have not been identified with any outstanding historic events, except that those connected with it have contributed to the welfare of the community by being pioneers, and soldiers in the service of state and country.

Amos Scott Baxter

Approved

Howard Hisher
District Officer

Feb. 15. 1937

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6/15/37